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FOR EUR/NB AND INR/B

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TAGS: [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EN](#)

SUBJECT: ESTONIA: BIO OF INCOMING AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S.

Classified By: ADCM Eric Johnson for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has named Vaino Reinart as Estonia's new Ambassador to the United States. Reinart is one of the MFA's most senior and respected diplomats, and has a high reputation for his intelligence and skills as a political operator. As Estonia's former Ambassador to the European Union (EU), Reinart brings significant insight on the inner workings of the EU. He will likely prove a useful resource in understanding the Government of Estonia's (GOE) positions vis-a-vis Brussels. Reinart will arrive in the U.S. on August 11. End Summary.

Preliminary Background:

Life Prior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

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¶2. (U) Vaino Reinart (Phonetic: vu-I-no RAY-nart) was born in Kurressare, Estonia on December 28, 1962. Reinart's educational and professional background, prior to joining the MFA, is in engineering. He graduated with a B.S. in radio physics from Tallinn Technical University in 1986. While still at university, Reinart was hired as an engineer at the Estonian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics in 1984. After graduation, Reinart stayed at the Institute and was gradually promoted to Research Associate. In 1988, he quit his position to do post-graduate research in optics.

¶3. (U) In 1990, after finishing his studies, Reinart began his long career in public service. He was hired by the Ministry of Culture (MOC) to serve as Executive Assistant to Minister Lepo Sumera. He worked in the MOC for two years. (Note. Former Prime Minister Mart Laar was also working at the MOC at the time as an advisor in the Historical Heritage Department. End Note.) In 1992, Reinart joined the MFA. He was part of a cadre of young English-speaking, well educated bureaucrats recruited by then President Lennart Meri to build the Ministry and establish its professional reputation in Estonia and across Europe. (Note: The MFA was re-established in 1990 by Meri, just prior to Estonia's re-independence. End Note.)

Helping to Build the MFA

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¶4. (SBU) Reinart has served in a number of high-level positions in the MFA. His first position, in 1992, was Secretary General. In 1993, he moved to the Political

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Affairs Department where he served as Counsellor and Head of International Organizations and Security Policy. From 1994 to 1995, Reinart was the chief negotiator for Estonian-Russian talks on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Estonia. He is credited for composure and flexibility



in dealing with Estonian nationalists who wanted a more aggressive approach while still holding a tough line with the Russians. Although he is not the architect of Estonia's negotiating tactics, Reinart's skill and contacts with U.S., EU, and Russian actors played a crucial role behind the scenes. In 1995, after the negotiations successfully came to an end, he was promoted to Director of the Political Affairs Department. He became Ambassador to the OSCE a few months later, and served in this position from 1995 to 1999. Upon returning to Estonia, he served as Director General of the Political Affairs Department from 1999-2001 and then Deputy Permanent Under-Secretary for Political Affairs from 2001-2002. In 2002, Reinart was appointed as Estonia's first Ambassador to the EU, a position he held until June 2007. Estonia joined the EU during Reinart's tenure in Brussels in 2004. This gave him the unique experience of having to operate in Brussels as both an outsider and insider in EU politics.

15. (C) Reinart has the reputation of being someone who delves deeply into issues and uses overwhelming logical arguments to make his case in policy decisions. He often limits his involvement to those key priorities and issues that require his personal attention and delegates other tasks widely. Some officials within the MFA have construed this as a lack of interest in the issues he has delegated. However, officials who have worked most closely with him interpret this as evidence of the trust he places in his senior staff.

One of the MFA's Best  
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16. (C) Reinart is widely considered one of the MFA's heavy hitters. He is admired for being a quick study, extremely articulate, and thoughtful. While he appears reticent in public, he built a reputation in Vienna, Brussels, and Tallinn as a smooth and effective operator behind the scenes. Domestically, Reinart has steered clear of party politics and MFA sources tell us he has no interest in taking a partisan role. However, as Reinart is fairly young and has already reached the most senior levels of the MFA, our contacts do not discount the possibility of his entering politics someday.

17. (C) Reinart brings to the table a different skill set than outgoing Ambassador to the United States, Juri Luik. Reinart has less experience with how Washington operates than Luik did when he arrived in D.C. Some of Reinart's former staff have told us they believe he will take a more low-key approach to promoting closer U.S.-Estonian relations than did. Reinart's strength, based on five years service in Brussels, will be his invaluable understanding of the inner workings of the EU. He will likely prove a significant resource for understanding the GOE's perspective on Estonia's role as a member state.

Misc.  
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18. (U) Reinhardt is fluent in Estonian, English, and Russian. He also has a basic level of French and German. He has been decorated as a Commander in the French Legion of Honor and with the Polish Order of Merit. He is extremely fond of the outdoors and is an avid cross country skier. He is married to Kaire Jurgenson.  
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